

AMaeth

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Summary: One-Shot. Why? 'Cause the zombies at my neighbors, that's why.

AMaeth

****A.Maeth.****

A one-part short story.

He burned the last of the bodies with the flames, turning the choking corpse of Lieutenant Locus into a white-black pile of ashes. Then he brought out the antique vacuum cleaner emblazoned with the logo Dyson and cleaned the mess up, leaving the gray-steel deck as clean as it had been a day ago.

From far away, coming from the south where he had locked the gates that lead towards the hangar bay, he could hear the pounding of unearthly flesh on steel. Zombies, he thought irately; then he thought of how he had warned them, all the rest of the crew, about the living dead on deck- and no one had listened. "Ol' Mal's gone off the rockers again," they'd say, and now look at them- mauled to death without a single scratch on them.

Malcolm thought again about how odd it was that everyone had died without a single mark on them, except for a gray, purplish complexion on their faces and of how most had had their hands wrapped around their throats. Perhaps they had been trying to commit suicide from the unholy terror the supernatural brought to them; but Malcolm thought it unlikely. After all, they had all had pistols strapped to their sides, much like how the regulation commanded them to in case of a surprise Covenant attack. Trying to throttle yourself was pretty much a doomed task, much like trying to stop smoking. Malcolm knew; he had tried both many, many times. And with that he had concluded that both problems could be solved easily by putting the barrel of the pistol into your mouth and pushing- that was important, because you could no longer pull- the trigger. Death, after all, was the

greatest deterrent a smoker could face in his quest for the next hit of nicotine. Not that even Death was insurmountable.

The smell of burning flesh still lingered around the ship, and Malcolm thought wistfully of pork-chop dinners in the cafeteria. But that time seemed as far away as the poundings of the zombies on deck. And that brought to his mind a question: why hadn't the zombies, like the ones in the movies, ripped the faces and throats off of the poor, doomed crew?

Oh, yeah. Because he had stopped them. Malcolm hadn't been able to save the crew in time, but by leaking the atmosphere from the hallways where the crew had been fending off the zombies, he had finished the monsters off. The things had melted away with the atmosphere, however.

Malcolm prepared his death with much flourish. After all, he did not mean to wait for the zombies to come back; they were pounding on the steel doors disconnecting the habitats with the hangar/stock room. Soon they would bust it down, and would come pouring through. Whatever manner of death the monsters had sent down upon the rest of his crew Malcolm did not know, but he was sure that it was painful. So he had the pistol- loaded, with two rounds left- on the table before him, with the bottle of 2341 Perignon waiting beside it, and a small plastic cup filled halfway full with the wine mentioned above.

He would drink, get drunk, and then kill himself. How much more romantic could you get, after all?

But first would come the recording. The recorder in his hand started to hum as he keyed it on; then, he said-

_I have a bottle of wine beside me that I filched from the el-tee's stash. Not that he would care now, anyways; being dead probably mellowed him out a little. _

_The zombies. Right. Back to the topic, then. I heard them when I was sneaking a smoke in the toilets, scuttling around the hangar where the Longswords were docked. I was surprised for a while- got scared shitless. I made record time taking a crap, though. Fear's like ex-lax, in that. Tends to squeeze things out. _

_The hangar had been deserted, but I saw them. The things, I mean. Scuttling around. One of the charged at me, a big-ass monster with shiny arms, and I managed to lock them out. Then I opened up the doors leading outside and the monsters were sucked out. _

_The next day the el-tee called us up, said there'd been a murder. I knew right away what had happened. The zombies had eaten them. So I said, "zombies ate them." But everyone laughed, sarge got pissed, and no one believed me. Not when I described the things. _

_That night I had trouble falling asleep, because although I had flushed the things out to space, there might be more hiding around the corners. Then I heard them again- scuttling around the ceiling. I rose; went over to the lights. Palmed it on. _

_Zombies surrounded me. Hundreds of them, rising from the beds of all the others, finished feeding on their bodies and now setting out for

me. They screamed and screeched and cursed. I cried; I ran away. One of them tried to grab me, and I did the move that sarge had taught me before. The one where you grab the wrist, snap it back, and crack it in half. It screamed, called me a 'fucknut.' The zombies were taking the intelligence of the people it ate. Oh god, I thought.

_

_indentlong silence. _

_I just drained half the bottle in two cups. When the bottle's gone I'll shoot myself. _

_I ran through the corridors. The zombies were now pouring out of rooms. One of them came out with the el-tee's badges. I knew then that the el-tee was dead. Everyone was dead, except for me. I was the only human left. _

_I knew what I had to do. I had to do what I did at the hangar. Suck the things out of here. Get revenge on the others. So I ran. _

_I got to the bridge, where the controls are. A zombie stood there. Lini wasn't there. The zombie must have eaten her. I took out the pistol and shot it twice in the head. It died. Blood came out and splashed over the deck. Some of it flecked over me. _

_I stepped over the body. I took the controls. The zombies were now pounding on the door, but I had locked it. Too bad for them. The code word, I knew, was 'Amaeth.' _

_The zombies all had that word on their foreheads. Amaeth. 'Cept that the A's were gone, and only Maeth remained. Falsehood. _

_I keyed in the depressurization of the atmosphere outside in the corridor. There came the sound of hissing air. The zombies all screamed, gargled, and then died. _

_After an hour, I put the air back in. Then I went outside. _

_Only the bodies of el-tee and the others remained. The zombies must have spat their bodies out. No marks were on them. So I think the zombies must have swallowed them whole. _

_I burned up the bodies with the flamethrower. It's not an open-flame version. It's more like a cattle prod than anything else.

_

indentlong silence

Only half a cup still remains of the wine. This is me, Malcolm Gibson.

Then he turned the recorder off. Grabbing the plastic cup, he drained the wine- bitter and astringent- down in one shot.

****The End.****

End
file.